

John Baptist's Office continued in all Ministers of the Gospel:

O R,
A Sense of our Want of Him, the only Disposition for Christ.

A
S E R M O N

Preached in the
Parish-Church of *Bexley*, in *KENT*,
On *Saturday*, June the 24th, 1758.

In Compliance with the Appointment of *John Styleman*, Esq; late of *Danston* in that Parish, who, by his last Will and Testament, left a Freehold Estate of one hundred Pounds *per Annum* for ever, clear of all Abatements, for the building twelve substantial Alms-houses for the Reception of twelve Families belonging to that Parish, at the Option of the Minister and Church-Wardens: and after the building of them, to be equally divided yearly between the said twelve Families.

By *HENRY PIERCE*, M. A.
Vicar of the Parish; sometime Student of *Trinity-College, Dublin*. Author of two Letters in Defence of our present Liturgy, against the "*Candid Disquisitions*;" and more especially the Author of the "*Expediency*, &c. of altering the present Liturgy.

Repent ye, for the Kingdom of GOD is at Hand, Mark iii. 2.—*John stood, and two of his Disciples, and looking unto Jesus he said, (to them) Behold the Lamb of GOD!* John i. 35, 36.—*Lo! I am with you always, even to the End of the World*, Matt. xxviii. 20.

L O N D O N:

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P R E F A C E.

THE Author of this Discourse has desired me to acquaint the Public, that it was not his first Intention to publish it. But having considered how pertinent the Subject is to a Visitation Sermon, preached by him some time since, at Sevenoakes, before the Right Worshipful Doctor John Bettesworth, late Dean of the Arches, he judged it might be proper to annex it thereto; not by Way of Instruction to his Superiors or Equals in the Ministry; but to help Candidates for Holy Orders, or the younger Clergy—to beget in them awful Thoughts of the Importance of the Office they are entering into, or have just entered: And that more especially, because the very Beginning, as it is called by St. Mark, and indeed a very important Part of the ministerial Function, namely, the alarming and striking, the awakening and quickening dead, or (at best) careless, luke-warm, philosophic, decent, harmless Sinners, into a Sensibility of themselves, or into a saving Knowledge of their own Hearts; and, by this

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Means,

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Means, preparing them for the Gospel, which is, "making its Kingdom at Hand:" is the most superficially treated of in that Discourse, of any other.

He desires further, that his Brethren of the Clergy in general may know, that it was not at his Instance, that the said Discourse was annexed to the last Edition of the Homilies and Articles with Notes, printed by the late John Lewis; for he thinks it unworthy of such Honour: But that, at that pious Editor's Request to him, it was done: And wishes, that he had let the several Quotations continue (as published in the first and second Editions) at the Bottom of the Page; and not brought into the Body of the Discourse, as there.

As to his "Letters in Defence of our present Liturgy," he acknowledges their Inequality to the great Importance of the Subject; but that (though non defensoribus istis) needful it was, that something should be done, by Somebody, to stop the Mouths of Gainsayers——those Deists, Arians, and Antitrinitarians, who, having "shot their Bolt" beyond the Mark, have missed it; as they have struck at the Foundation of Scripture as well as Church——of the Church indeed in general,

general, in their “so candid *Disquisitions*,” and “*Expediency*, yea *Necessity* of altering the present Doctrines as well as *Liturgy*. And that could he have prevailed on some Persons, he applied to, (Persons of greater Abilities, both of Head and Heart) he had never had the Hardiness or Ambition of entering the Lists with such reputable Opposers of the Truth, “the Truth as it is in JESUS!” Whom yet he calls upon, now a third Time, to “explain, what they mean by “Happy Constitution Ecclesiastical,” since the *Liturgy*, “Articles, and Homilies, which they are for altering, if not setting aside, are not IT.” Or, “since the Doctrines of Trinity in Unity—that divine Essence of Man, in which he was originally created, and to which he must be again restored, by putting on the Lord Jesus Christ, if he will be Man, and happy; —The Doctrines of Salvation by Grace, and of the UNCTION (literally Christianity!) of the Holy Spirit, which is their Sum; that Unc-tion which alone christianizeth, which alone begetteth both Repentance and Faith, which alone giveth Power to natural Religion, weak as it is, through the Flesh, says an Apostle; which alone setteth up the Kingdom of GOD in the Heart of Man; which alone filleth it with the Graces of the Holy Spirit;

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Spirit; which alone sheddeth abroad therein that Love of GOD and Man, which is the "fulfilling of the Law," and is the one Source of good Works (say our Homilies) ever inseparable from this saving Faith; are not IT.

Lastly, he desires, that the Readers of the above Letters will correct the Errors of the Press in them, viz. In the Letter, p. 4. l. 30. to read every third Year. P. 23. l. 10. for so in, is in, l. 22. for Self-Enmity, Self-Sufficiency, Enmity. P. 25. l. 33, to read, not Christian, because that is humbling. P. 34. l. 6, for their, your. In the second Letter, for Offspring, to read Original. P. 90. l. 9, dele other. P. 59. l. 24, dele to, and some others.

The PRINTER.



LUKE i. 17.

*And He shall go before Him—to
make ready a People prepared for
the Lord.*

HERE are two Persons spoken
of in the Text, our Lord *Jesus*
Christ, the Eternal GOD! the
great *Mystery of Godliness*, GOD
MANIFESTED IN THE FLESH! the Saviour
of all Mankind; and *John the Baptist*, who
was the Messenger long before prophesied
of in that gracious Character: namely, to
go before his Face, on this divine Errand,
even, to *make ready a People prepared for the*
Lord.

The History of *John the Baptist* we have
already considered, on former Occasions, in
his miraculous Birth, his holy (because self-
denied) Life, his Constancy and Faithful-
ness, his Courage and Intrepidity, his Op-
position and cruel Treatment from an unbe-
lieving World, which was not worthy of
him. But in this indeed he was typical of
the Usage they have ever met with, and
must yet expect to meet, who *continue* his
Office; that is, by calling Sinners to Re-
pentance, by shewing them their Death in
Sin, their undone Estate through the Fall,
in

in order to beget in them *an Hunger and Thirst* after the Righteousness of *Christ*; *make ready a People prepared for the Lord*. For *Christ*, and the Blessings of the Gospel always follow after.

I shall, at this Time, consider his *Office* only, *continued*, as it must be, in *others*, who are also sent before the Face of our Lord, to *prepare his Way*; or, as it is expressed in the Text, to *make ready a People prepared for the Lord*.

As *Jesus Christ's* coming into the World was a sure Proof of his Love to Mankind; to that *relative* Creature, whose Misery made even himself unhappy; or (as the Prophet expresses it) *oppressed and afflicted, bruised and put to Grief*—As the Creature he had made in his own Image, was now become miserable through the Loss of it—and as GOD so loved the World, that he would give his only begotten Son to become *Man*, that Man by *Re-Union** with Him, might *again* recover this lost Likeness of GOD;* be happy again, and not perish through Want of it: So it was reasonable to think, that an Affair of such Consequence—a Business of more Importance than a thousand Worlds, should be ushered into the World in proper Characters and Attitudes; with suitable Har-

bingers

* * *How reasonable then, as well as divinely Good, is that Gospel, that offers Jesus Christ to be received by us, John i. 12. to be born again of him, ch. iii. 5. to be created anew, Col. iii. 10. to put on the Lord Jesus Christ, Rom. xiii. 14.*

bingers or Forerunners, with significant Ambassadors: Not barely, that Men might be prepared to receive him; but that he might make his Entry, agreeable to the Sense and Purport of his Coming; his coming in *Lowliness* to atone for the *Pride* of the Nature he had assumed; for the Insult offered by Man to GOD; for the Spirit of *Independence*, who thought to have been a *GOD himself*; or that he might enter on the Stage of this World *agreeably* to the Nature and Manner of the inestimable Blessing intended for Mankind; by rendering him happy again, in Dependence on his GOD. Gen. iii. 5.

Now the Station and Quality, the Figure and Appearance of these *Ambassadors*, viz. of *John*, appointed by GOD the Father, to go before the Face of his Son *Jesus Christ*; of the Apostles, and of the Seventy commissioned by our Lord himself to *go before his Face, into every City and Place, whither he himself would come*; do prove these four Things.

First, That the great Sin against GOD—that *Blessed Trinity*, which made Man in it's own Likeness, to be happy in itself; was *Unbelief* (notwithstanding) in this GOD—was a *Will turned from GOD*—was a proud Spirit of *Self-sufficiency*†—was a *Lust* of knowing more than GOD willed him to know†—was a *Diffidence* in GOD's All-sufficiency, Truth and Goodness—was a *De-*
fire

†† Hence, O ye Free-Thinkers, your boasted Freedom of Thought, the Pride of your Scepticism and Infidelity!

fire of *Independence* on him, an *Estrangement* of Heart from him, an *Alienation* (says the Apostle) from *the Life of GOD*—was consequently a *Concupiscence* or Lust of Happiness in the Creature *out of GOD*:‡ *All* which begat a foreign, an unnatural *Sensibility* in Man after other *Good*, or *more Gods than one*; ‡ and which *more* than divided his Heart with *GOD*.‡ That therefore all Means of Humiliation, both in *Christ* himself and his Attendants, should be used, to mortify this Rebel Pride, this Self-Will; and to subdue this Concupiscence, this Self-Sufficiency, in the *very Nature*, that had insulted infinite Goodness and Love: And that the *Humanity*, (so extolled by the *Pelagian*, whose *Unbelief* sees not its utterly undone State) that the “Manhood taken into *GOD*,” might (through Union with *Christ*) be *infinitely* humbled, and abased before *GOD*; and even more than that (for *GOD*’s Word cannot be revers’d) undergo the threatened Death, it had incurr’d thro’

Gen. ii. it’s Apostacy.

17. Secondly, The Station and Quality, the Figure and Appearance of these Ambassadors of *Christ* do prove; that a Death to the *Old-Man*, to the polluted fallen Nature, in order to his Restoration to, its Resurrection in, the

††† They, who live without *GOD* in the World, *Eph. ii. 12.* may hence see the Source of their Happiness in themselves, and the Creature; as of their independent Spirit.

the *lost* Divine Image, or a Deadness to the Things of this World (except what is allowed, or needful to the getting well through it) namely, to the *Lust of the Flesh, the Lust of the Eyes, and the Pride of Life* (the World's *Trinity*,* their more Gods than one*) was,

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*** An unthanked Author, who has done great Service to Christianity as distinguished from Paganochristianism, or the Formality of what is called Religion among us, says as follows: "From what has been said of the first State and Fall of Man, it plainly follows, that the Sin of Sins, or the Heresy of all Heresies, is a worldly Spirit. We are not to consider this Temper as only an Infirmary or pardonable Failure, but it is indeed the great Apostacy from GOD and the divine Life. It is not a single Sin, but the whole Nature of Sin, that leaves us no Possibility of coming out of our fallen State, till it be totally renounced with all the Strength of our Hearts. Every Sin, be it of what kind it will, is only a Branch of the worldly Spirit that lives in us. There is but one that is good, says our Lord, and that is GOD; in the same Sense it must be said, there is but one Life that is good, and that is, the Life of GOD and Heaven.—Hence it is, that all the Religion of fallen Man, all the Methods of our Redemption have only this one End, viz. to take from us that strange and earthly Life, we have gotten by our Fall, and to kindle again the Life of GOD and Heaven in our Souls: Not to deliver us from that gross and sordid Vice called Covetousness, (that is, Concupiscence) which even Heathens can condemn; but to take the whole Spirit of this World entirely from us: And that for this necessary Reason; because all that is in this World, the Lust of the Flesh, the Lust of the Eyes, and the Pride of Life, is not of the Father, that is, is not that Life, or Spirit of Life, which we had from GOD by our Creation, but is of the World, and of the Flesh, and of the Devil."*

in the Nature of Things, as well as in the Wisdom of GOD, the *one only* possible Method of redeeming fallen Man from this foreign, unnatural Love to created, in Preference (as is the Case) to his *real* GOOD ; and from the as unnatural Usurpation of the Devil over him ; in order to free him from his Slavery, and make him happy again in his original State.

Thirdly, The Figure and Appearance of these Messengers and Attendants of *Christ*, do prove ; that a *Conformity* to the Cross of *Christ* — a *drinking into* the *Power* of his Death, and not empty Profession ; not bare Speculation or *formal* Assent to these Articles of Faith, is what is meant by, “*He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried.*” For that the Cross, though It be but the *bruising Christ’s Heel* (as indeed of all his *living* Members) *must bruise Satan’s Head in us.* That the *Cross* is the *Way* to the Crown, is evident from the whole Sense of Revelation—from the whole divine Process—from the divine Economy of Gospel-Salvation : as is evident in particular from these *emphatic* Words of the Apostle, “the Fellowship of his Sufferings,” the being “made conformable to his Death,” the being “buried with him—the rising with him ;” “ye are dead, and your Life is hid with *Christ* in GOD ;” “I rejoice in my Sufferings for you, and fill up that, which is *behind* of the Afflictions of *Christ* in my Flesh ;” “This is a faithful Saying, that if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him ; if we suffer

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fer we shall also reign with him; but if we deny him, (in this respect) He will deny us." And yet where is the modern Christian (tho' the Word be so general *—as extensive as *whosoever*) that thinks he has any thing to do with, "*Whosoever doth not bear his Cross and come after me, cannot be my Disciple?*" *

Now a poor, fruitless *Opinion* in the People, which some call *Faith*, concerning these Truths; and an *explaining them away* in the Air of a Metaphor or Figure (as the *New-Birth* is generally treated) by *Teachers*, is both a *Denial* of the Cross, and one

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fatal

* * *Nay, St. Luke is still more express, "and he said unto them ALL, if any Man," ch. ix. 23. and yet many Christians think they have as little to do with this Text, as with, if any Man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his, no Christian; or with IMMANUEL, GOD with us; Christ in you the Hope of Glory: Though the one Thing necessary to restore fallen Man in the lost Image of GOD! But say the ungodly Learned, (whether Deist, Arian, or nominal Christian) "I find no such Injunction "in the Law of Nature." And the godly Antinomian, who, in the same Spirit, declaims against the Law, Hell, and the Devil, (but indeed are not all unmeaning Formalists, as well as licentious Livers, Antinomians?) desires also to be excused with a hail, Master! in high Veneration for Christ; "in whose Person he has done every Thing—" repented, believed, loved, and obeyed, and therefore nothing for himself to do." Thus is all Conformity to Christ and his Cross (though so needful to the putting off the old Man) still evaded. The Reproach and Sufferings of the Cross, or Christ crucified, is, to this Day, unto the Jews a Stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks Foolishness; however to the meaning and sincere Christian, it be the Power of GOD, and the Wisdom of GOD!*

fatal Cause, why the Christian World (so called) is, as it is—meer Name for Efficacy, meer *Shadow* of the Thing, without the Substance—without *Experience* of, or *Conformity* to, the Mysteries; Blessings, and Powers of the Gospel! So justly does the Apostle exhort such *formal* Professors, such Pretenders to the Gospel, such Christians, who boast of Christianity, and yet vilify that UNCTION which *alone* can make them such;

2 Cor. *Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the Faith,*
 xiii. 5. *prove your own selves, know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be Reprobates; ἀδοξαστοι, Persons who neither have, nor desire Proof of, nor Experience in, these Things, so essential, and of the last Importance.*

Fourthly, The Station and Quality, the Figure and Appearance of these Ambassadors of Christ, do plainly shew, that his Kingdom is not of this World—that the Kingdom of the Gospel, or Gospel of the Kingdom, as it is indifferently called; or the Kingdom of GOD is (in this Life) nothing more, nor less, than GOD's Rule again in the Heart of Man—his Resumption of his rejected Authority, under which alone Man can be happy.—It is subduing, by the Grace of his Holy Spirit, the Power and Dominion of the Devil, which he had usurped over Man—It is subduing even the rebellious Will*

* *Witness, for the Credit of bare Reason and boasted Argument! the stupid as impure Religion of Heathen Ages, when Men, O ye Deists, inferred as strongly as ye do now.*

Will of Man to his own upright Will—
 His reducing Man's *would be* Independence
 both in Knowledge and Happiness (in the Gen.
 Exercise of which the subtle Serpent told iii. 4, 5—
 him, “he should be a GOD himself;”)—
 His reducing, I say, Man's boasted Know-Heb.
 ledge into *humbling* Faith, as it implies both xi. 1.
Dependance and Reliance—his *animal* Happi-
 ness into Hope and Expectation of good
 Things—of better Things than these—
 Things more suited to his divine Capacity,
 more agreeable to his original Excellence
 than those, the yet *apostate* Man *now* places
 his Happiness in: by this Means bringing
 Man back to a happy Submission and Re-
 liance on GOD, through “*the Kingdom of*
GOD within you.”

Now, my Brethren, had the Kingdom
 of *Christ* been of *this World*, it would have
 come with *Observation*, says our Lord—in Luke
 worldly Vanity, Pomp, and Splendor. The xvii.
 Harbingers of *Christ* had been the great 20, 21.
 ones of the Earth—Kings and Princes at—Homil.
 tended with Dukes and Noblemen had pre-on Na-
 ceded, as assisted at his Birth—His *Mani-*tivity.
festatation in the Flesh had not been first re-
 vealed to poor Shepherds keeping Watch
 over their Flocks by Night; but to the
 great *Sanhedrim* of the *Jews*—the Doctors
 of the Law—the wise and learned Heads
 of GOD's Church then upon Earth. *John*
Baptist had been something more than a
 simple Messenger; even versed in all the little
 Arts of Time-serving and Intrigue—he had
 been like some of his *Successors* in Office, a

Reed shaken with the Wind; carried about with every Blast of vain *Doctrines*, of worldly *Wisdom*, of the *Wisdom of Words*, of *Philosophy* after the *Traditions of Men*, of polite *Ethnicism*, and of *School-Divinity*—turned from his Purpose by the softest Breezes of courtly Grandeur, of vain Expectations from the World, of genteel Complaisance, of base Flattery; had kept a sumptuous and luxurious Table; and not been clad in a rough Garment of Camel's Hair with a leathern Girdle about his Loins; nor would have mortified on Herbs, and such Fare, as a desert Wilderness afforded—Locusts and wild Honey. He would not have been so rude and unpolite as to preach of nothing but that sneaking Thing called Repentance, or that *Stumbling-block* the *Cross*; whereby Men are to forsake the dear World and dearer Sin: nor have been so unmerciful, as to strike it's Axe at the Root of

Mat.iii. 10. Lust—of that *Concupiscence* that has usurped the Throne of GOD in Men's Hearts; of those Tempers, Inclinations, and Affections, that are the Kingdom of the Devil in them: as they are *still* continually lusting after the forbidden Tree and its deadly Fruits—the *Pomps and Vanities of this wicked World*—those Riches, Honours, and Pleasures, that make Men dream, they can be happy out of GOD.

Had *Christ's Kingdom* been of this World, or had *John Baptist* been a polite Teacher of this World, he could never have been so ill bred, as to call the *Reputable* of this World,

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the Scribes and Pharisees—to call them *Hypocrites*—a *Generation of Vipers*, or with the ruder *Jesus*, say, they *were of their Father John the Devil*, and therefore *the Lusts of their Fa-* viii. 44.
ther they would do. Had *John Baptist* been one of those worldly Preachers, who, instead of Grace—that *Power of GOD to Salvation!* extol *Humanity*, (unawakened and dead as it is to GOD) or the Excellency of Man, and his *Sufficiency* to Salvation; he would never have exhorted Man from Self-dependence, or what is *meerly* of Man—from Dependence on any *outward* Thing whatever; on Forms, Times, or Places *only*; or on the most celebrated *Substitutes* for *vital* Religion—the Religion, the Devotion of the Heart to GOD—or, (as one calls it) *the Life of GOD in the Soul of Man*—the loving him with all our Strength, the worshipping him in *Spirit and in Truth*—the *Renewal* of our fallen Nature, and it's Restoration in the divine Image. He would never have declaimed against false Religion, Shew, and Appearance therein—he would never have struck down the Props of Men's outward *Formality*; of their empty, *fruitless* Profession; of their human Righteousness, their imagined Merit; of their Dependence on this or the other Church, of their Descent from *Luther* or *Calvin*, or even from *Abraham* their Father; without the *Life* and *Love*, (those sure Characteristics of CHRISTIANITY, as distinguished from what is vulgarly called Religion) without the *Spirit* and *Power*, the *Ends* and *Purposes* of such Profes-

Profession : for that GOD (when looked to in Brokenness of Heart, in a *feeling Sense* of our *undone* State through the Fall, and in Hunger and Thirst to be restored again to our *original* Relation to him) was able *even of Stones* to raise up Children to *Abraham* : Children—loving and obedient Children, whose Hearts he softens by the Whispers of his Grace, by the *Unction* of his Spirit, and that of Stones (the obdurate Gentile World, the natural, though educated, Heart) into sensible *Hearts of Flesh*. For that *Christianity* is peculiarly the Religion of Christians—nothing short of that *anointing* of GOD's Spirit, which *teacheth all Things*, and leads Men into all Truth ;——that Christianity Heb. i. is *Christ*, the *express Image of GOD's Person*,
 3. formed *again* in the Hearts of Believers by the Mysteries, Blessings, and Powers of the Gospel begun, carried on, and finished in Faith. And in *Faith*, that the Creature, who, through satannical Pride*, would be (miserably) *independent of GOD*, might be *again* happily dependent on him. FAITH ! sown in the little Grain of Mustard-seed (how proper a Document for the Pride* of Man, which, in order to lay low, GOD does nothing pompous) sown, I say, in the little Grain of Mustard-seed—*little !* therefore despised by the haughty Pride* of *Deists* and *Arians*—FAITH ! little, great Thing !
 little

*** *An Author of the first Class of Writers, truly christian and pious as well as ingenious and learned, says of this*

little in the Eyes of lordly Man, great in the Sight of humble Angels !*—of no Esteem with our Philosophers, yet doing Wonders *here*, to the removing the Mountains of Sin, both original and actual ; it's Guilt, Pollution, and Dominion in this Life ; and *hereafter* freeing from the Wages thereof, *eternal Death*. For so said GOD, *in the Day that thou dost so, thou shalt surely die*—" in the " Day that thou preferest created Good before me, thou must take the *Lot* of Creatures, have an End with what Creature can afford thee ; yea, of sinful Creatures : for as I have made thee a Partaker of my own Immortality, die thou *must*, but a never-ending Death!"

But behold the Power, the *Victory of Faith* ! for nothing is little in GOD's Hand. This Faith, the *Gift of GOD* ! of Eph. ii. the 8.

this Pride that was not made for Man—this Spirit of Independence and Self-sufficiency — the fatal Cause of Man's Apostacy ; " And all this to make it known through " all the Regions of Eternity that Pride can degrade the " highest Angels into Devils, and Humility raise fallen " Flesh and Blood to the Thrones of Angels. This, this is " the great End of GOD's raising a new Creation out of " the fallen Kingdom of Angels. For this End it stands " it's State of War—a War betwixt the Pride of fallen " Angels, and the Meekness and Humility of the Lamb of " GOD—It stands its thousands of Years in this Strife, " that the last Trumpet may sound this great Truth thro' " all the Heights and Depths of Eternity, viz. that Evil " can have no Beginning but from Pride, nor any End " but from Humility.

* *Whose Dependence on GOD, may imply Faith, as it is inseparably connected with It.*

Col. ii the *Operation of GOD!* not only overcoming the World, (the Lust of the Flesh, the Gen. Lust of the Eye, and the Pride of Life) but, iii. 15. as the *inspoken Word of Life*, overcoming Death also, and groweth up into a Tree, (and who need wonder, for the Grain of *Mustard-seed** is the *Kingdom of GOD* within you?) so that the Birds of the *Air come and lodge in the Branches thereof*. O Grain of *Mustard-seed!* O little Faith! little I've said John in the Esteem of the learned *Deist*, great in vi. 45. the Heart of the simple Christian, *taught of GOD*: As thou wast the *Dawn of Happiness* to be restored, the *incorruptible Seed*, the 1 Pet. i. 23, 25. *Word of the Lord that endureth for ever*, and by the Gospel is preached unto us.—As thou wast the

* The above-quoted spiritual Writer proves it thus: "The Seed of the Woman (says he) is the Spirit, and Power, and Life of GOD, given or breathed again into Man, to be the Raiser and Redeemer of that first Life, which he had lost.—It is nothing else but the Power, and Life, and Spirit of GOD, as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, working, creating, and reviving Life in the fallen Soul, and driving all it's Evil out of it. It is IM-MANUEL in every Soul. It lies as a Treasure of Heaven and Eternity within us. It cannot be divided from us by the Power of Man. We cannot lose it ourselves, but by Unbelief. It will never leave us nor forsake us, till, with our last Breath, we die in the Refusal of it. Again, this is the true Nature of the spiritual Life, it is as truly a Vegetation as that of Plants. And our Lord, to shew us that the New-Birth is really a State of spiritual Vegetation, compares it to a small Grain of Mustard-seed, from whence a great Plant arises." See Mark iv. 26, 27.

the Beginning of Hope, the *Spring* of Life in *Adam*, the *first* convinced Sinner; so shalt thou be of the *last* that shall be born of Woman; uniting *them both*, and all true Believers between them, in thy wide extended Branches, to have Communion with *Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*, from whom they fell through *Unbelief*; but are *again* happily united in *thee*, for ever and ever! LIE in the Dust then, thou Wisdom of Man! thou *minute Philosopher*, that can'st no more John REASON Life into thy Soul. (no, it must be *iii. 3, 5.* a *Birth from Above* in thee) than thou can'st add one Cubit unto thy Stature! thou *Naturalist*,* that hast put it from thee, and hast judged *thyself unworthy of everlasting Life*, Acts by doubting, "*how* are the Dead raised up, *xiii. 46.* "and with *what Body* do they come?*" Know, that that which thou sowest, thou sowest not *the Body that shall be*, but bare 1 Cor. Grain; but GOD giveth it a *Body*, as it has *xv. 37.* pleased him, and to every Seed, (and what ineffable Powers, and Virtues, and Glories, to the *Mustard-seed* of his own Grace!) to every Seed† his own Body. But

* * See a short but sufficient Confutation of the Reverend Dr. Warburton's projected Defence (as he calls it) of Christianity in his "*divine Legation of Moses*," in a Letter to the Right Reverend the Bishop of London, by William Law, A. M. Sold by J. Richardson in Paternoster-Row.

† John Arndt, in the first Book of his true Christianity, says, that, as in every Seed, how small soever, is contained, in a wonderful and hidden Manner, the Nature and

But the chief Point, my Brethren, that I purpose to prove in this Discourse, is the CONTINUANCE of *John Baptist's* Office in the *Ministers* of the Gospel—the Dispensers or Stewards of the Mysteries of *Christ*; namely, their important, very important Office of calling Sinners to Repentance—of striking them (through the Assistance of GOD's *reproving* Spirit) into such Conviction, as shall make them cry out with the happy, converted Jailor, *Sirs!* What must I do to be saved? Thus making ready a People prepared for the Lord.

Acts
xvi. 30.

For to suppose, that nothing of *John Baptist* concerns us now, but the History of one Man; as too many, alas! read the whole *New Testament* as a Story that little concerns them, and in which they have no Interest: whereas nothing in the World concerns them half so much; the whole *New Testament* being the *last Will* of GOD, (as the Word signifies) in which, not only many
2 Pet. i. “rich and precious Promises,” but as rich Legacies are bequeathed to every one of us: to
4. suppose, that nothing of *John Baptist* concerns us now, or that his Office of “making

and Properties of the whole Plant, the Make and Substance of the Tree, with all the numberless Fruits thereof; so in every Man there is a Seed of Sin from Adam, as a Seed of Grace from Christ. So the Birth of every Man is twofold, the first after the Flesh, the second after the Spirit. Thus says our Lord to Nicodemus, that which is born of the Flesh is Flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit

king ready a People preparad for the Lord" was to cease with his Person or Life; would be the greatest Mistake, that Men could be guilty of—as great a Misconception of the divine Goodness to lost Man, as to conceive that the Office of preaching the Gospel, of having a *delegated* Power over unclean Spirits, that is, of being Instruments, in *Christ's* Hand, of *cleansing* the Hearts of Men of unholy Affections and Tempers; of *casting out Devils*—the Devils indeed! of *Unbelief, Self-sufficiency, Pride, evil Concupiscence, Malice, Envy, Falshood*—these *hellish* Dispositions! which even Reason and common Sense were sufficient to convince us, *could not* be the *Image of GOD*, in which Man was originally created perfect and happy; that, therefore, *the Enemy hath done this*: To judge thus, I say, of *John the Baptist*, and of his Ministry and Baptism of Repentance—that solemn, awful Way of bringing Souls to *Christ*, and of making his Kingdom (the Gospel) *at hand*; would be as wrong a Judgment, as to say, that these subsequent Powers and Commissions were not delegated to the *Apostles*, with whom our Lord yet says, *Lo! I am with you always, even unto the End of the World*. Even unto the End of the World! and yet these Apostles, as well as *John Baptist*, were mortal Men. The Commission, then, (unless we will swallow another Absurdity as great, *viz.* that the Blessings of the Gospel were designed only for the *apostolic* Age) to *John* and the *Apostles*, must have been to *them* and

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But the chief Point, my Brethren, that I purpose to prove in this Discourse, is the CONTINUANCE of *John Baptist's* Office in the *Ministers* of the Gospel—the Dispensers or Stewards of the Mysteries of *Christ*; namely, their important, very important Office of calling Sinners to Repentance—of striking them (through the Assistance of GOD's *reproving* Spirit) into such Conviction, as shall make them cry out with the happy, converted Jailor, *Sirs!* What must I do to be saved? Thus *making ready a People prepared for the Lord.*

Acts
xvi. 30.

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Luke
ix. 1.

Matt. x.
8.

Matt.
xiii. 28.

their *Successors* in the Ministry; till *Jesus Christ, the Lord GOD Almighty, shall take un-*
 Rev.xi. *to himself his great Power, and shall reign;*
 17. *and that, in both the important Offices of*
calling Sinners to Repentance, and then mi-
nisterially offering them Pardon and Peace—
Justification and Sanctification; that as our
Church prays, “they may not only serve
“ him with a quiet Mind, but be cleansed
“ from all their Sins.” For as GOD
“ has given (and still gives) Power and
“ Commandment to his Ministers, to de-
“ clare and pronounce to his People, if pe-
“ nitent, the Absolution and Forgiveness of
“ their Sins; so he ever has and will pardon
“ and forgive all them that truly repent and
“ unfeignedly believe his holy Gospel.”

Now then, my Brethren, let us consider more particularly the Office of *John Baptist* in two of his divine Commissions especially; for I have endeavoured on former Occasions to enforce every Thing else concerning him; let us do this, I say, and then judge, whether such *Burdens* of the Lord, I may call them with the old Prophets—such awful Trusts—Trusts of such Importance, and so indispensibly necessary to the Salvation of all, that are apostatized from GOD in *Adam*; and *must* be brought to him again through the *one Mediator*, or they can never be happy: Whether such an Office was to end with *John*, or whether it be not continued in all Ministers of the Gospel, who are *ordained for Men in Things pertaining to GOD*; more especially to *dispose* them to

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Repentance from a *feeling** Sense of their fallen State, and *Want* of a Saviour; and then *bid them* (for *now* they are the Poor, the Lame, the Halt, the Blind, the *Demoniac*, the Paralytic) *to the Marriage Feast*.

First then, one principal Office of *John* was the *Ministry* or *Baptism* of Repentance. I indeed baptize you with *Water* unto Repentance. And the Writers of the Gospel say, he went into all the Country about *Jordan*, preaching the Baptism of Repentance for (in order to) the *Forgiveness* of Sins—that *Repentance unto Life*, as 'tis called—Repentance to *Salvation*—Repentance from dead *Works*, or (as the Church of *England* expresses it) Repentance *whereby we forsake Sin*: For, indeed, when Men are *thus* re-proved or convinced of Sin—when they see themselves stripped of all their Excellence—all their Likeness to GOD—all their Ability to hold Communion with GOD—all that could make them good and happy: and not only so, but odious in GOD's Sight—odious through a rebellious *independent Spirit*; through Blindness of Heart; through Pride, Vain-glory, and Hypocrisy; through Envy, Hatred, and Malice; and all Uncharitableness to both GOD and Man (the *Homil.* *very Nature* of the Devil in them) they *on Re-*groan, they travel, and are heavy laden.—*pen-*
C 2 pant- tance.

* So speaks our Church in her Visitation-Office, "The Almighty Lord, &c. make thee to know and to feel, that there is none other Name under Heaven given unto Man, in whom, and through whom thou mayest receive Health and Salvation, but only the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ."

panting to be delivered, to be set free from this *Tyranny*, and brought back again into the Kingdom of Peace, under the sweet Conduct and Guidance of GOD; *whose Service is perfect Freedom*—whose Kingdom is Love, and Truth, and Happiness—the Sceptre of whose Kingdom is a Sceptre of Righteousness—a Kingdom, that not only
 2 Cor. (through the *Ministration of Righteousness*)
 iii. 9. bruise *Satan's Head* with a Rod of Iron, and destroyeth Sin in us; but is *Righteousness; and Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghost*.

And was all this intended (think we) was all this intended only for the happy Souls under *John's Ministry*? Let us not make them so great a Compliment. This would be as stupid, as to confine (with some) the Miracles of *Grace and Unction** within the apostolic Age. No, my Brethren, it is a Blessing CONTINUED to us also—the very “*Power and Commandment*” given to the present Ministers of the Gospel. And, as with *John*, so is it the first Step also of our Ministry, even to endeavour to convince Men, that they are lost and undone Sinners, till brought to the Gospel—that the *Humanity*—the whole Manhood (so applauded by the *Deist* and *Pelagian*) did what *Adam*
 Rom. did—that all have sinned, and come short of the
 iii. 28. *Glory of GOD*.

And

* *Whatever may be said for the Ignorant and Unlearned among us, every learned Man knows, that Christianity is Unction, and Unction Christianity : in plain English, THE ANOINTING, 1 John ii. 20, 27.*

And indeed, in one respect, we have harder Work to do than had *John Baptist*, as greater Sinners are *they* that sin under greater Light—the Light of the Gospel, the Light of Grace; than they who sinned only against Types and Shadows, the Rites and Ceremonies of the *Jewish Law*, or (to say the most) who sinned against the Rigour of a Commandment without Grace; from whence *Sin took Occasion to work in them all* Rom. vii. 8. *Manner of Concupiscence*. But admitting the Sins of the *Jews* to be more than *this*; even that *they* only, and not we, crucified the Son of GOD: All that *they* did comes not up to the *Malignity*, the *hellish Hypocrisy* of retaining his Name CHRISTIAN*, and, at the same Time, setting light by, if not reviling his UNCTION, which *alone* can make Men *such*.* But

* * I know of nothing, that comes near such Hypocrisy as this, that at the same Time that it retains only his Name, rejects all the Ends and Purposes—the Mysteries, Blessings, and Powers of his Gospel; except it be the Spirit of an Antinomian, who boasts so much of GOD's "distinguishing" Love, and talks so much of his "own Justification" (whose first Fruit should be Love) without loving GOD again; for he that hath much forgiven, loveth much; he that loves much, obeys, 1 John v. 3. and his Obedience must imply Law, for Love is the fulfilling of the Law, Rom. xiii. 10. and great, O GOD, is the Peace that they have, who love thy Law, and they are not offended at it.

But that speaking against the Holy Ghost, and his divine Work of Grace on the Heart, is the greatest of Sins, nay, (in the greatest Concern of all, viz. true Religion) "living without GOD in the World," we have the greatest Authority, both of Christ himself, (Matt. xii. 32.) and of his Apostle, (Eph. ii. 12.) and yet, that false Pretences, (properly

But yet, who is he that dare exert the Spirit of *John*—who is he that dare now tell Men that they are a *Generation of Vipers*—the Spawn of the subtle Serpent, whose *evil Communication* corrupted our first Parent's good *Manners*; who first tempted them to *Unbelief* with those baleful Words, "*Yea, hath GOD said,*" and then prompted them to *Apostacy* and *Independency* on GOD; even to *EAT* and *KNOW*—to be wise and happy out of GOD in the Creature and themselves? *Who* is he that dare resume our Lord's Words, *Ye are of your Father the Devil*, and therefore *the Lusts of your Father ye will do*? And yet *this* we must, *to open Men's Eyes, to turn them from Darknefs to Light, and from the*

Acts *Power of Satan unto GOD, that they may receive*
xxvi. 18

perly ENTHUSIASM) false Pretences to Christianity, to *Unc-tion*, to the Spirit of GOD must arise and continue, so long as Men are Hypocrites; so long as Self-love and strong Imagination (*those sandy Foundations of Formality and Profession!*) remain in the Heart, is undoubted. It is safer then to argue a posteriori in the Case, than a priori; namely, from the Effects of our Principles. And therefore, says our Lord, Ye shall know them by their FRUITS. *Dost thou then love the Lord thy GOD with all thy Heart? dost thou love thy Neighbour as thyself, and do unto all Men as ye would they should do unto you? From this divine Principle there can be no Doubt; for here thou hast that Love to both, which is the fulfilling of the Law to both, Rom. xiii. 10—from this divine Principle, (the Love of GOD and Man) the Law of Nature (weak as it is thro' the Flesh, Rom. viii. 3.) is strengthened by Grace. And indeed here all the Powers of Grace and good Understanding (both of them from GOD, 1 Cor. iv. 7.) meet; and evidence at once both the true Christian, and the good Man.*

ceive Forgiveness of Sins—this we must, if we ¹ Cor. will be faithful, and it is required in Stewards ^{ix. 16.} that a Man be found faithful. For so dead ¹ Cor. are the Souls of all Men to GOD, through ^{iv. 1.} his just Sentence, that nothing short of the ^{Gen. ii.} Power of Christ's Resurrection in that very dis- ^{17.}abled and dead Nature, can raise Men from “their Death in Sin to a Life of Righteousness,” says our Church. And that this is the Power of saving Faith, (for all Things are possible to him that believeth, trusteth, relieth on GOD) the Apostle says expressly, “that ye may know—what is the exceeding Greatness of his Power to us ward who believe, according to the Working of his mighty Power, ^{Eph. i.} which he wrought in Christ, when he raised ^{19, 20.} him from the Dead.*”

Now to set John Baptist's Axe to the Root of this Sin—this Unbelief, the Sin of Sins! and its fatal Consequence, Apostacy from GOD to every perishing Creature—This, I say, requires more Courage, more Constancy, more Heroism than to attack the strongest Fortrefs upon Earth. For it is assailing the Devil himself in his own strong

* Here indeed, the Words, in the Original, “echo to the Sense.” For as Faith, that saves, being the Power of GOD in the Heart, is compared to the Almightyness of Christ's Resurrection, in our Nature that died, from the Dead: So the Apostle uses Words, that, (were I not afraid to offend our Men of Taste, who so prefer classical to all revealed Writings, I would venture to say) surpass all their adored Excellencies, as much as the Subject, is above all the Sublimity of Human Invention, or poetic Genius; *Και τὸ ὑπερβ ἄλλον μέγεθος τῆς δυνάμεως αὐτοῦ, κατὰ τὴν ἐνέργειαν τοῦ Κράτους τῆς ἰχυος αὐτοῦ.*

strong Hold, the Heart of the *Apostate*: yea, it is even binding the strong Man: but indeed it is, through the Strength of *Jesus*, the *stronger*. It is spoiling his House, *this Heart*, of the ill-got Goods—that *impoverishing* Treasure! the *evil Thoughts*, *Murders*, *Adulteries*, *Fornications*, *Thefts*, *false Witness*, *Blaspemies*: the Things that *defile a Man*! in a Word, it is cleansing the Heart of the *Idolater*—of the *Worldling* and *Sensualist*, of the *Covetous* and *Ungodly*, of *their false Good*, and bringing them back to the *GOD* of their Life; in whom (the *nearest* and *most concerning* Essence in the whole *Extent of Things*!) as they *live*, *move*, and *have their Being*; they can *alone* be happy both in *Time* and in *Eternity*.

And *who* is sufficient for these Things? No Man indeed. All our Work is only *ministerial*, as *John's* was. But as this whole Ministry, from the Beginning, is of *GOD's* express Appointment, he will work *with* his faithful Servant, who, after *John's* Example, dares “constantly to speak the Truth,” the *Truth as it is in Jesus*; dares “boldly to rebuke Vice,” and then, “patiently to suffer for the Truth's sake.” *Christ* ever did, and *still* does, follow the Steps of *such* his Forerunners, because they are expressly commissioned “to go before his Face into every City and Place, whither he himself will come.” And he has ever since been coming in the Hearts of Men; *now*, as in the Days of his *Flesh*, *going about doing Good*, and *healing all those who feel themselves oppressed by the Devil*. And all this, my Brethren,

in

Collect
for St.
John's
Day.

Luke x.
1.

Acts x.

38.

in Consequence of his Promise, to send his Holy Spirit, the *Comforter*, to begin and carry on his Work in your Hearts; as well as to assist and work with his Messengers—in Consequence more especially of *that* Promise; “that the *Holy Ghost* should glorify him by receiving of mine, says he, (namely, the whole Effects, the *Mysteries*, *Powers*, and *Blessings* of his *Mediation*) and shewing them, or applying them to you—even the *Mysteries*, *Blessings*, and *Powers* of his *Incarnation*, *Birth*, *Life*, *Death*, *Resurrection*, and *Ascension*, and sending of the *Holy Ghost*; by all which (brought home to the Believer’s Heart) our Church prays to be delivered, or saved (especially in Times of *Tribulation*, in the Hour of *Death*, and in the Day of *Judgment*) from Sin, Death, Hell, and the Devil. And indeed, my Brethren, if you harden not your Hearts, if you quench not his Spirit, if you revile not his Work in your own Souls by giving it the opprobrious Name of *Cant* and *Enthusiasm*; but especially if in the *Sense* of your own Church, you always look for his Grace to “prevent and follow you*” that by it you may “have a right Judgment in all Things,” that by his holy “*Inspiration* you may think those Things

John
xvi. 14

Litany

* * *A few, for the Sense of our Common Prayer throughout. See the Collect for the 17th Sunday after Trinity; for Whitsunday; 5th Sunday after Easter; Litany; and the Collect at the Beginning of the Com. Service, which, knowing, that Love is the fulfilling of the Law; how is our Church to be applauded for right Judgment, in prefixing such a Prayer before reading of the Law!*

Things that are good, and by his merciful Guiding I may perform the same;" that "it
 " may cleanse the *natural* Thoughts of
 " your Hearts to the *loving* GOD *perfectly*;"
 to the " receiving his Word *with pure Affection*" and to the " bringing forth the
 Fruits* of the Spirit:" If *thus*, I say, you
 are disposed as *Christians* and *true Churchmen*;
Christ will say to every one of you, " Be-
 " hold, I send the Promise of my Father upon
 " you;" even that Promise of Promises,
 " When he, the Comforter, is come, he will
 " reprove or *convince* the World of Sin, of
 John " Righteousness, and of Judgment;" as it
 xvi. 8. contains the *whole Process* of the Work of
 Grace in Men's Hearts—shewing them
 first, that they are lost Sinners, through
 their original Sin in *Adam*, or, as 'tis ex-
 pressed in the 9th Article, " through the
 " Fault and Corruption of the Nature of
 " every Man, that is naturally engendred
 " of the Off-spring of *Adam*;" and then,
 secondly, the *one Way* of Pardon and Peace
 with GOD, namely, the Righteousness
 Phil.iii. which is through the Faith of *Christ*, or the
 9. Righteousness which is of GOD by Faith.
 Luke And then, thirdly, *judging*, or *condemning*
 x. 18. *Satan* in Men's Hearts, *bruising his Head*,
 Gen. according to the very first Promise of
 iii. 15. Grace; subduing Sin, and setting up the
 Kingdom of GOD *within* them, in all the
 Gal. v. *Fruits* of the Holy Spirit, which *are* his
 21, 22. Kingdom; namely, Love, Joy, Peace,
 Long-suffering, Gentleness, Goodness,
 Faithfulness, Meekness, and Temperance.

For

For without these *Fruits*, these *Marks*, these *Evidences** of Faith ; though some without them may boast of their Justification and Peace with GOD, they have not yet put on Christ, they are not yet in the Kingdom of GOD.*

Now

** If those who revile and write against all "*Marks and Evidences*," that is, *FRUITS of Faith*, (as they must be understood) would set aside Partiality or Self-love and strong Imagination ; they would find, that notwithstanding their high Pretences to an absolute, irrespective Election, and sola Fide, as they explain it ; they are ἀδοκίμοι (2 Cor. xiii. 5.) without Proof, Conformity to, (Luke vi. 40.) or Participation of Christ, (Heb. iii. 14.) and, if they understood Greek, I would refer them to St. Peter's meaning Character and indispensable Attribute, or Essence of saving Faith ; which is not only more precious than perishing Gold, though it be tried in the Fire, but will be found unto Praise, and Honour, and Glory, at the appearing (or Revelation) of Jesus Christ—even his το δοκίμιον ὑμῶν τῆς πίστεως YOUR Trial of Faith, as it may be translated ; which implies both St. Paul's Obedience of Faith (Rom. xvi. 26.) his being not without Law, but under the Law to Christ, (1 Cor. ix. 21.) his fulfilling the Law of Christ, (Gal. vi. 2.) and the very Purport of St. James's second Chapter : on Account of which, one of their Demagogues blasphemously calls the Whole, Epistola Straminea.

And that their Detestation of Law in general, is against the moral Law, whether as "*working Wrath and Death*," "*slaying the Sinner* ;" or (then) as a "*School-master*" both instructing and menacing the ignorant and tardy Soul to Christ, so "*converting it*," and becoming to every David not only a Rule of Life and Manners ; but the Joy and Delight

Now then, my Beloved, if any of you, through the Ministry of the Baptist, now or heretofore are taught of GOD, and are even in the first Stage of *Uction*—reproved of Sin—under a striking Sense of Guilt before GOD,

Delight of his Heart, Ps. cxix: or lastly, whether that Enmity and Rebellion against GOD (so natural to all Men) rise against the Law, as it is a Transcript of the Rectitude and Holiness of GOD—that their Detestation, I say, of Law is not only against natural Religion and “the moral Sense,” but against the Word of GOD, the DECALOGUE which comprizes the Whole of Man’s Duty to GOD and his Neighbour, is hence evident; in that the typical and ceremonial Law is out of the Question, as no longer in Being; as the SHADOW only of good Things to come: whereas their Ravings are against Things in Being, “the Law, Devil, Death and Hell!” which, in their Writings, they seem equally to detest, and pray without Distinction to be delivered from—without mentioning the one Thing in the Law to be dreaded by the Sinner, and from which Christ has redeemed him; when believing, namely, THE CURSE OF THE LAW, Gal. iii. 13. as they should always do on such Occasions.

But however detestable; detestable indeed! the Doctrine of Antinomianism be to all, who believe there is a GOD, and acknowledge, that Man is his Creature and Subject; and, as a rational Being, bound to obey his moral Law—however everlive it be of all Authority both of GOD and Man over us—however contrary to both the Law of Nature, and Revelation, that is, to all Religion—however evasive of the Sense and Spirit, the Ends and Purposes of the Gospel; which were not only to create Man a-new, but to bring back his Heart from Anarchy and Rebellion under the Obedience of Faith, (Rom. xvi. 26.) and to beget that Love in it, which is the Fulfilling of the Law, (ch.

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GOD, forcing you to cry out, *What must I do to be saved?*—If any of you know so much of your own Hearts as to see yourselves in fallen *Adam*, (for the *Humanity* sinned and fell) and that you have been shunning

xiii. 10.) and which all of that Persuasion acknowledge to be an inseparable Fruit of their Justification; for “he that hath much forgiven, loveth much.” To which let me add, “this is the Love of GOD that we keep his Commandments; and to such his Commandments are not grievous” (1 John v. 3.)—however, in fine, the Antinomian Spirit, which “teaches Men so,” incurs the Censure, “he shall be called the least in the Kingdom of Heaven.” I have great Charity for ignorant Antinomians, whom may I accompany in Glory!—the sincere Populace, I mean, among them, who either consider as little the rebellious Spring of their Principles, even the Heart that says, Who is the Lord, that I should obey him? as the Consequence, or fatal Tendency of them.

And as to their Leaders or Teachers, I would hope that their Heads are more to blame than their Hearts. And even of Luther, though sincere, I am forced to say, that he wanted Judgment (as appears, especially, in his Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians) to temper his just Abhorrence of the Popish Merit of Works; and that he bent the Stick (as is often the Case in polemic Divinity, an unseen Agent ever delighting to drive Men into Extremes; sometimes into the Fire, and sometimes into the Water) that he bent the Stick, so much the contrary Way, that he brake it; and incurred that Blunder in Argument, which the Logicians call, the inferring too much.

If with the Nicolaitans of old, or the nominally Christian World at present, they practice (as well as write) against “all Marks and Evidences” of Faith; I am ready

ning GOD, and hiding your fallen Nakedness from him with the poor Fig-leaves of an *imagined* Righteousness—If any of you (now enlightened) are convinced (I say) of Sin—that Sin which is *Hell* in the Heart, and so *feel* your Want of a Saviour, and of his Salvation *from* it—If any of you are *travelling and heavy laden*, and so crying out, *Who, who shall deliver me from the Body of this Death!* If your Mouths are stopped through the *Ministration of Condemnation*; (for the Holy Ghost, proceeding from the Father and the Son, must *first* be a Spirit of *Fear and Bondage* before he can be a Spirit of *Adoption*)—If your Mouths are happily stopped, I say, and you are become guilty before GOD—If any of you, humbled through the Knowledge of your own Hearts, can stoop to be saved as a *Sinner only*, and with the Harlots and Publicans who came to

2 Cor.
iii. 9.

to cry out with the best of Writers, τὸ σκοτος πόσον! how great is the Darkness! if they are truly Christian in Heart and Life, how absurd is their Conduct! but there are more Signs of the latter Day than Earthquakes in divers Places, and the Love of many waxing cold, Matt. xxiv, 11. Mark xiii. 21, 22.

I close up my Judgment of that irreligious as unchristian—that monstrous Tenet, (which I hate, and not the People) that it is, as I have said elsewhere, a “wrong-headed Doctrine.” But perhaps I do not understand them. If so, I should be glad to be informed. And, as I am open to Conviction, so it becomes them to remove from me, and all other Christians, all Stumbling-Blocks and Occasions of Offence.

to *Christ*, you can cry aloud, and say, *GOD*
be merciful to me a Sinner! If the Law,
without which you have hitherto been alive, has
 exerted it's *Office* upon you, (*has worked* Rom.
Wrath) and you can truly say with the *A-* iv. 15.
posile, "When the Commandment came, Rom.
 Sin revived, and I died"—If the Law vii. 9.
 (whose Works, notwithstanding, as *your* Matt.
 Works, you may ignorantly have confided xix. 20.
 in) look *shily* upon you, confessing it's Im- Rom.
 potence to Justification; and as a *School-* viii. 3.
master only to *Christ*, tell you plainly, "that
 cursed is every one that continueth not, *that*
continueth not, in all Things, in all Things Gal. iii.
 written in the Law to do them." In a 10.
 Word, if you are *hungering and thirsting* for
 the Righteousness of *Christ*, and with the
 inflamed Affections of a *Magdalene* to have
 your *seven Devils* (all your unclean Spirits,
 your ungodly Affections) *cast out*—If you
 can come with the poor *Paralytic*, the un-
 clean *Leper*; if you can come with the
 Lame, the Halt, the Blind; whose *Sensibi-*
lity of their wretched and lamentable State
 was the *proper Disposition* for Relief—If *thus*
circumstanced, you can apply to *Jesus Christ*.

I will shew you another principal Part of
 the *Baptist's* Office; and it was to point out
 to *such* of you, (*O be joyful*, and heartily re- Pf. xcvi.
 joice in the *Strength of your Salvation!*) it
 was to point out to *such* of you, (and *such*, I
 bless *GOD*, there are among you) It was
 to say to you, "BEHOLD THE LAMB OF John i.
GOD! THAT TAKETH AWAY THE SINS 29.
OF THE WORLD!" expressive of the Voice

of Angels on the same Occasion, who praise
 Luke ii. sing GOD, said, “ *Glory to GOD in the*
 13, 14. *Highest, and on Earth Peace, good Will to-*
wards Men! ” —expressive of a loud Voice
 Rev. from Heaven, “ *Now * is come Salvation and*
 xii. 10. *Strength, and the Kingdom of our GOD, and*
 Rev. xi. *the Power of his Christ; for the Kingdoms of*
 15. *this World * are become the Kingdoms of our*
 Lord,

* * *These Words have been fulfilling in particular, ever*
since John's Baptism of Repentance, which setting it's Axe
to the Root of Sin in us, is the Violence (the pulling out
this right Eye) offered to our corrupt Nature that taketh the
Kingdom of Heaven by force: they are still fulfilling in
every penitent, that is anointed of GOD, or a true Chri-
stian: or where ever there is a true Church (that is, King-
dom) of Christ; however scattered through the several
Denominations of Christians, who dare to confess Christ
before Men, in Opposition to what is called Religion—that
handling the Word of GOD DECEITFULLY through
Philosophy, (or School Divinity) after the Traditions of
Men, after the Rudiments of the World, and not after
Christ! What a goodly Mixture of Ethnicism and Chri-
stianity! Dr. More calls it, Pagano-christianism, the
applauded Spirit that is, and has been opposing the SENSE
of Scripture, as well as of our “happy Constitution Ec-
clesiastical!” but alas! continue it must in the outward
Temple, or outer Court thereof, during the Reign of the
Beast; for it is given up to the Gentiles forty and two
Months, (Rev. xi.) after which Time the Words will have
their full Completion, when (all other Principalities and
Powers being subdued, (1 Cor. xv.) Christ shall reign
over his Confessors, who have not been ashamed of his Go-
spel w a p d a p a in it's Uncorruptness, (Rom. i. 16. Eph.
 vi. 24.) *a thousand Years, Rev. xx. 4.)*

Lord, and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever !

And such Love had *John* to his own Disciples in particular, (as all GOD's Ministers have to those who are awakened and converted under their *Ministry*) that he sent *John*iii. them (especially because he knew they were 26. prejudiced in his own Favour) that he sent them to *Christ*, to be convinced with their own Eyes, that *it was* he *that was* to come, the *promised Seed* of the Woman, the *Desire* Gen. iii. 15. of all Nations, and in whom all Nations of Hag. ii. the Earth *should be blessed*; that it was *he* that 7. was to come, *and not another*. And *this*, by Gen. xii. 3. seeing the Prophecies and Promises of the Old Testament, all confirmed and accom- *Isaiah* xxxv. 5, 6. plished in *Christ*; in that the Blind received their Sight, the Lame walked, the Lepers were cleansed, the Deaf heard, the Dead (the Dead especially in Trespasses and Sins) were raised, and the Poor, the Poor in Spirit, the humble, self-condemned Sinners, had the Gospel, the glad Tidings, (and to them *only* glad Tidings) preached to them —εὐαγγελίζοντα: were evangelized or *gospelized*—had that Gospel, for which they were before disposed by *John's* Baptism of Repentance, *brought home* to their penitent Hearts, in all its Mysteries, and Blessings, and Powers.

From what has been said, my Brethren, we may observe, first, that not a bare natural Sorrow, or what the Apostle calls, the

the Sorrow of this World,* but that Repentance, which is the *Gift of GOD*, and which our Church tells us, we must “*beseech him to grant us*,” is the Repentance of Christians, is *Repentance unto Life*. For him
 Acts v. hath GOD exalted, says St. Peter, with his
 31. own right Hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give *Repentance unto Israel*, and (then) *Forgiveness of Sins*. And this Repentance is ever known by it's *Fruits*; for it is a *dying to Sin*, or, as our Church calls it, “*Repentance, whereby we forsake Sin*”—Such a Mortification of our fallen Tempers, (not in Man originally) Pride, Self-sufficiency, Envy, Hatred, Malice, Falshood, &c. as pulls down these *strong Holds of Satan*—such a Self-denial (and our Lord says, if any Man will come after me, let him deny himself) as begets in us a *Conformity to Gal. ii. the Cross of Christ*—“*a Death unto Sin, 20. “a new Birth unto Righteousness.*” For Rom. behold, says the Apostle, this self-same
 vi. 5. Thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, (*κατα Θεον*, according to GOD) what Carefulness it hath wrought in you; yea, what clearing

* Namely, which is proper to worldly Men, not regenerated by GOD's Spirit, whose Grief is but a sharp Feeling of their Miseries without any sincere Repentance, or a Remorse and wounding the Conscience for their Sins; without Faith, Amendment, or Conversion to GOD. Now they whose Sorrow and Repentance proceeds only from Fear of Punishment, or of GOD's Vengeance; fall into Despair, as Cain, Saul, Judas, and others, Diodati, on the Place.

clearing of yourselves; yea, what Indignation [against yourselves]; yea, what Fear [of offending]; yea, what vehement Desire [after, and to please GOD]; yea, what Zeal [for his Glory]; yea, what Revenge [on yourselves, and those sinful Lusts, that fought for Happiness out of GOD].

We may learn, secondly, from what has been said, that *Christianity alone* as it signifies Rom. viii. 3. the *Unction* of his Holy Spirit, as it not only supposes, but *enforces* the *moral Law* by that *Grace*, which no Law can give: for *could* there possibly have been a Law given to Gal. Man in his *disabled, fallen, dead* Circum-iii. 21. stances, that *could* have given Life, verily, says the Apostle, Righteousness *might* have been by the Law*; we learn, I say, that *Christianity* is, especially, the Religion of Rom. *Christians*—that *Christianity*, as it sheds a- xiii. 9. broad the Love of GOD and Man in the 10. Heart, the “moral Sense,” the *one* “moral Rectitude” (so vainly, so impotently boasted of by our *mere Naturalists*) is the *Religion of Christians*: and that to preach (as some florid Divines do) *bare* natural Religion, or moral Philosophy, as it is generally taught by them to imply a *Sufficiency* in Man to his own Salvation, and, (what is a still greater Absurdity) *Merit* in his Works, is to misguide, is to lead from the Point, is to give false Hopes, or put us on a wrong Scent,

is

* He therefore justly infers, “the Scripture hath concluded all under Sin, that the Promise by Faith in Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.”

is to *insult Weakness*; nay, is *Egyptian Cruelty*, to demand the Tale of Brick without Straw. No. I will be bold to say, that *Ethnicism* and School-Divinity are but meagre Food for an *awakened Heart*, for a con-

Matt.v. *vinced Soul*, that is *hungering and thirsting*

6. after *Christ*, that is *seeking the Kingdom of*
Matt. *GOD and his Righteousness*; and that every

vi. 33. *Christian Minister's Purpose should be that of*

i Cor. the *Apostle, I have determined to know nothing*

ii. 2. *among you save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.*

To say no more, the Church of *England* is acknowledged, even by her *Enemies*, to be above all others, *charitable*; and yet she is severe, if so I may say, upon *one* Occasion, namely, when provoked by those, who preach or receive any Doctrine but *Jesus Christ*. “They are to be held accursed,

Art. 18. “says she, that presume to say, that every
“Man shall be saved by the Law or Sect
“that he professeth, so that he be diligent
“to frame his Life according to the *Law*,
“and the *Light of Nature*: For Holy Scrip-
“ture doth set out unto us *only* the Name
“of *Jesus Christ*, whereby Men must be
“saved.”

Thirdly, You see here, my Brethren, the blessed Effect of *Conviction* of Sin*; that *Brokenness** of Heart, the Cause of true Repentance,

* * *In the Language of the World*, “*melancholy Mad-
ness*,” “*Despair*, &c.” “*May not this be done (say they)*
“*without driving Men to Despair? I answer, 1st, that*
“Reason

penitance, which the Disciples of *John* had been under from the constant Tenor of his Preaching, which was to call Sinners to *Christ*: for now only are they glad to hear of the *Lamb of GOD, that taketh away the Sins of the World.*

Fourthly, You see herein the Office of *John Baptist* CONTINUED in all Ministers of the Gospel, who must first be *Sons of Thunder*, before they can be *Sons of Consolation*: As you must first be under the Law, Disciples of *John*, before you can come into the Liberty of the Gospel, Disciples of *Christ*. ^{Rom. viii. 15.} And take Heed to yourselves, my Brethren, that with the People who heard *John*, and with the Publicans, you justify *GOD*, receiving his Ministry, and being *being baptised* ^{Luke vii. 29.} with his Baptism; and this, as you would avoid the sad but just Fate of the Pharisees ^{30.} and Lawyers, (those holy, good Men at the Head of *GOD's Church*!) who reject-
ed

“ Reason itself tells us, no Good whatever can be looked
 “ for, much less obtained, till the Want thereof is hearti-
 “ ly felt. And, secondly, for one Person who is lost thro’
 “ Despair, (which can never be, where there is the least
 “ Grain of Faith) a Thousand perish through Security and
 “ Presumption. But alas! can the World find out no
 “ better a Term than that contemptible one Despair for our
 “ Lord’s fundamental Blessing, the very Beginning of
 “ Christian Hope, POVERTY OF SPIRIT? O where is
 “ our Church’s “right Judgment in all Things?” how
 “ contrary is the Spirit of the World to what of the Gospel!”
 See the Preface to a Fast-Sermon, intitled, Infidelity the
 Ruin of a People; or, Unbelief the damning Sin,

ed the Counsel (the Purpose) of GOD against themselves, being not baptised of him. For, *self-righteous* as they were, *whole*, and not needing the Physician, *they knew him not*; but *did unto him whatsoever they listed*.

Mark
ix. 13.

Fifthly, You see here, that while Men are dead in Trespasses and Sins, that is, while they are asleep in a *natural State*, *unawakened*, *unconvinced* of Sin, they think kindly of, and converse with all Manner of Sins as with a Bosom Friend, (and indeed it is Nature, it is Complection)—they not only commit it themselves, but have Pleasure in those that do them; or (to express their utmost Dislike) *talk* only of Sin, as they may of the Poison of an *Adder*, *un-stung* by it; for as they see not it's *Deformity*, as neither their Learning nor Philo-

Mark sophy can open the *Sink* of the *bloody Issue*; vii. 21, they lament not, that it is *Death*, that it is 22. *Hell*, that it is the *Image* of the Devil in them* which has spoiled them of their original Beauty, in having effaced the Image of GOD; and therefore are no more solicitous to be *restored*, than the Man is to be healed, who, having a mortal Disease, can not be persuaded of his Danger; but thinks himself in perfect Health. Therefore are *formal Christians* (Christians without *Unc-tion*!) as indifferent to *Christ* and the *Power* of his Gospel, as to any Trifle upon Earth. But our Lord assigns the Reason, *they that*
are

* Read the Homily for Christmas-Day.

are whole need not the Physician, but they that are sick. I came not to call the Righteous, but ^{ii. 17.} Sinners to Repentance.

Sixthly, From what has been said, you see the blessed Effect of a true, living, saving Faith, in the revealed Word of GOD; as of the Misery of *empty* Profession—*Profession only* concerning the Fall of Man, concerning his Loss of the divine Image, concerning his Redemption again from the former, as his Restoration in the latter—a poor, formal, empty, fruitless Opinion—an *Opinion only* concerning such “Traditions,” as it never makes the formal Professor *miserable** for the one, nor *happy* for the other.

You see, *lastly*, the blessed Effect of a *meaning* Heart, that *closes* with the Gospel, and looks to have it *applied*; in first *feeling* the Misery of Sin, and then in getting rid of the Load thereof—in hungering and thirsting (thirsting with the panting Hart) after the Blessings of *Christ*—“*Christ the Light of the World*” — “*Christ the second Adam*, in whom all that believe shall be made alive *again*” — “*Christ the express Image of GOD’s Person*,” IMMANUEL, who ^{Heb. i. 3.} being formed in us, we recover what we ^{Gal. iv. 19.} lost in *Adam* — “*Christ the first Fruits of them that slept*” — “*Christ in you the Hope* ^{Col. i. 27.} of Glory” — a Blessing as natural, if it will bear any Comparison, as natural to the Soul of Man that knows itself, as is that of a Person (suppose of a deserted, helpless,

a

* *The Language of our Church, in her Litany.*

a starving Child, that has found the Comforts of it's Mother's Breast) that has lost his Beloved, but finds him again—all that could make him happy; has found again his *lost Piece of Money*—the *Treasure hid in a Field*!—the *Pearl of great Price*! for the which he is *now* willing to sell ALL that he hath—all his *substituted* Good, all that the Serpent tempted him with, by EAT and

Gen. KNOW—all that he has received from sin-
iii. 1, ful *Adam*—all his unholy Nature—all that
4, 5, 6. the natural Man is happy in, instead of
GOD. For now, at length, he confesses
the Truth of what his Lord had told him;
even that it is “profitable for him, that
“ one of his Members should perish, and
Matt.v. “ not that his whole Body should be cast
29, 30. “ into Hell.”

To conclude. To these happy Persons
lately so miserable under the *Curse* of the
Law, under the *Spirit of Bondage*, now so
Rom. happy under the Blessings of the Gospel,
viii. 15. under the *Spirit of Adoption*; who so repent-
ing, so believing, have found *Jesus* their Sa-
1 Cor. viour—their Saviour from the Guilt, Pol-
i. 30. lution, and Dominion of Sin—*Christ* their
Prophet, Priest, and King, in all that the
UNCTION, *Christianity* signifies; I have no-
thing more to say, than that they go on to
Phil iii. know him; the *Power of his Death and Re-*
9, 10. *surrection*—so to believe in him as to receive
John i. him; for to *such* only gives he Power to be-
12. come again the Sons of GOD. I have no-
Rom. thing more to say than that they put him on,
xiii. 14. so as to cover their fallen Nakedness, and be
Rev.iii. 18. restored

restored again in the Image of him, that created them. And with him to put on (as the Elect of GOD, holy and beloved) Bowels of Mercies, Kindness, Humbleness of Mind, Long-suffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, (if any Eph. iv. Man hath a Quarrel against any) even as 32. *Christ* forgave them, so to do. I have nothing more to say to these Children of GOD, who have *experienced* him *faithful* to his Promises, than that they *drink into* his Spirit—his Meekness, Humility, Patience, and Resignation to the Will of his Father; for this, *this* was the *Mind that was in Christ*; and so shall they be *complete* in him—to Col. ii. these Christians indeed, these *anointed Ones*, 10. who have said with the blessed Virgin, “*be it unto me according to thy Word!*” I have nothing more to say, than that through the same Spirit, that has brought them hitherto, they *testify* and *prove* this Blessing by it’s Fruits, by it’s *Marks* and *Evidences*; namely, “*by the Work of Faith, and Labour of Love,*” by an holy Heart, the Abundance of which will ever flow out into an holy Life; or that they *testify*, that they have *received Christ* by walking in him—that they *prove* their Justification; that they *prove* it, (for the Heart of Man is deceitful above all Things, through strong Imagination and Self-love)—in fine, that they *prove* their Faith; for *sola fide*, though a divine Truth to the *truly anointed*, to the *meaning* and *sincere* Christian; proves the Devil’s Trap to *Hypocrites*—that they *prove* their Acceptance
E with

with GOD, their Peace which passeth all (barely human) Understanding, by *loving the Lord their GOD with all their Heart, with all their Mind, with all their Soul, with all their Strength**—that they love their Neighbour (for the second is like unto the first) *as themselves*, and do unto all Mankind as they would they should do unto them; for

Art. 12. “good Works necessarily spring from a true and living Faith;” and this is the Law and the Prophets, which Christ came to fulfil both in himself, and by his Spirit in them.

Rom. xiii. 18. This Love is *the fulfilling of the Law*; this

Homil. Love, says the Church of England, is the one Source of all good Works.

on Ju-
stifica-
tion.

But

* The ingenious, as pious Mr. Hervey, has the following Words in a Postscript to his first Letter: “Shall I a-
“bridge the preceeding Letter, and contract the whole into
“those two great Commandments, which made the first
“awakening Impressions on my own Heart? Thou shalt
“love the Lord thy GOD with ALL thy Heart: Thou
“shalt love thy Neighbour as THYSELF—amazing!
“said your Aspasio. Are these the Commands of GOD?
“as obligatory, as the Prohibition of Adultery, or the Ob-
“servance of the Sabbath? Then has my whole Life
“been a continual Act of Disobedience. Not a Day, no,
“nor an Hour, in which I have performed my Duty!—
“This Conviction struck me, (as the Hand-writing upon
“the Wall struck the presumptuous Monarch) nor ever gave
“up the great Controversy, till, under the Influences of
“the Spirit, it brought me weary and heavy laden to
“JESUS CHRIST.” See Theron and Aspasio, 2d Vol.
P. 305. 3d Edit.

But that the greater Importance of the Subject may not occasion us to forget *John Styleman*, Esq; late of *Danſon* in this Pariſh, the *Founder* of this annual Diſcourſe, let us remember our Benefactor with Gratitude. And, that I repeat not what has been ſaid on former Occaſions, let me admoniſh *you* that enjoy his Benefaction, that by your Induſtry, and Sobriety, and religious De-meanour, you recommend yourſelves to the Miniſter and Church-wardens, who are, by his Will, empowered to continue you in, or to exclude you : And that *you*, who hope to be admitted on Vacancies into the Alms-houſes by him founded, do behave well : for no ill-behaved Perſons can be Partakers of that Favour.

And now, O *bleſſed Jeſus*, by whom and John
through whom *alone* we can come to GOD, xiv. 6
thy Father—Thou Author of all Grace,
let thy Holy Spirit bleſs the Word at this
Time delivered, to the Hearts of them that
have heard it ! Send down on thy *Clergy* in
particular, “ the healthful Spirit of thy
Grace,” that they may *all know whereunto*
they are called, and may *rightly divide thy Word* ^{2 Tim.}
of Truth. O illuminate all Biſhops, Priests, ii. 15.
and Deacons with the true Knowledge and
Underſtanding of thy Word, that by both
their *Preaching* and *living*—their *Life* and
Doctrines, they may ſet it forth and ſhew it
accordingly : and to this End, O Lord,
ſhut up their Hearts to a *worldly Spirit*, that
thy Name be no longer blaſphemed among
the *Gentiles*, nor their holy Profeſſion be

deemed a *Trade*. Give them (in *Continuance* of the Office of thy holy Servant *John Baptist*) “ constantly to speak the Truth,” (the Truth *only* as it is in thee, O *Jesus*) “ boldly to rebuke Vice,” and “ patiently to suffer for thy Truth’s sake ;” which thou hast said, *they must do*, if they will preach it *unmixt*, and in *Sincerity*. Embolden them, in Eph.vi. *his Spirit*, to call Sinners to Repentance, that
 124. *so coming to thee*, they may be *anointed* into all the Blessings of thy *Unction*—thy Christianity, as *distinguished* from what is called Religion amongst us: That so the People of this Land being brought, through their Ministry, into all the *Mysteries*, *Blessings*, and *Powers* of thy Gospel, they may have *meaning* Hearts, and experience *what* thy Kingdom is: that *their Eyes being opened*, and *turned from Darknefs to Light*, and from the
 Acts *Power of Satan to GOD*, they may receive For-
 26. 18. *giveness of Sins*, and an *Inheritance among them that are sanctified by Faith that is in thee*: To whom with thy Father and thy Holy Spirit, we ascribe, with the whole Christian Church, (from the Beginning) *equal Honour, Glory, and Praise*, both now and for evermore. *Amen.*

P O S T S C R I P T.

AS I have been kindly reprov'd, I may say, *miti sapientiâ Læli*, by a much-esteemed and good Friend, for “*too great Zeal*” in the *Visitation Sermon*, and Letters in Defence of our present Liturgy against the *so candid Disquisitions*, and Authors of the “*Expediency (yea Necessity) of altering our present Liturgy* :” “*For that Zeal (said my honoured Friend) without Love and Prudence does more Harm than Good* :” I would beg Leave to reply in the *Meekness of Wisdom*, were I a Proficient in that heavenly Grace; that in such a *lukewarm Age* as this, when our *Gallio's* Rev.iii.
15, 16.
Pfl.xix. care for *none of these Things*, a Zeal for GOD's House (his Church) should rather be *countenanced*, than continue *always* to have 9.
John ii.
17. *cold Water* thrown on it.

I honour, and esteem, and thank my good Friend for his Admonition; but I would humbly hope that my Zeal in the said lame Performances, has not been without Charity, without *Love* to our Church and her Clergy. If it be *quite so*, I confess myself mistaken: and *absolutely so*, as THIS was a *Motive* of my undertaking such a Task—my subjecting my weak Shoulders to such a heavy Burden, when I could prevail on none of my (scanty) Acquaintance to en-
gage

gage in it. And as to "*Prudence*" if he means thereby *worldly Prudence*, or *worldly Wisdom*, I confess myself no Proficient therein*: and should he mean *that* worldly Prudence,

* *Let the Simpleness (I presume not to say that divine Gospel-Grace Simplicity—that single Eye) of the following Letter, attest this—addressed to a late Most Reverend, after he had granted a Promise, of the only Preferment I ever asked him; (a Favour, 'tis known, frequently granted to the meanest Domestic) which was to put one of my Sons into the Charter-House School. And the Simpleness is more glaring, as the Event was foreseen.*

" May it please your Grace,

" *WHEN I came Home, I found I had not one left of*
 " *that Sermon, which your Lordship was so kind as*
 " *to encourage me to send you, and to tell me you would deign*
 " *to read; and was put to the Delay of sending to my Book-*
 " *seller for it. I dare believe your Grace's Moderation is*
 " *known unto all Men; and that you will judge kindly of*
 " *it from the Intention, whatever Defects it may have;*
 " *nay, though it have occasioned me to be looked upon ever*
 " *since, as a speckled Bird among my Brethren.*

" *Indeed, my Lord, I have been in a great Measure*
 " *tempted to judge, that some, who are so loud for the*
 " *Church, and her "HAPPY CONSTITUTION," mean*
 " *nothing. For what is the Constitution of our Church?*
 " *Are not these Homilies, Liturgy, and Articles still en-*
 " *joying (blessed be GOD) all the Authority that King,*
 " *Lords, and Commons, and Convocation can give*
 " *them; and breathing the very Spirit of the Scriptures,*
 " *from whence they are derived? and yet how despised*
 " *(generally speaking) the Homilies in particular; though*
 subscribed,

dence, Intrigue, Craft, Policy, which for
Preferment sake courteth Men in Power, or
 shunneth the Reproach of the *Cross* in this
Laodicean Age ; *this Prudence* I look for
 Grace

“ subscribed, assented, and consented to, again and a-
 “ gain, by all of us, under the 35th Article !

“ I fear, my Lord, that the pretended Excuse—the
 “ Obsolescence of their *Stile and Language*” in some Pla-
 “ ces ; is a non *Causa pro Causâ* for such their Treat-
 “ ment. Is not the real Offence, that they are too mean-
 “ ing, too scriptural—too full of *Unction* (*Christianity*
 “ you know, my Lord) for this *deistic Age* ? O what a
 “ Number of *Deists* are concealed under the Cloathing of
 “ *GOD's Children* !

“ But our Eyes are upon your Grace, who have shewn,
 “ at a very critical Time, such Zeal for the outward *Estab-*
 “ *lishment* at least—as much indeed as, at that Time,
 “ could have been done. And a good Omen then of what
 “ has since fell out. For has not the gracious Providence
 “ of *GOD*, that then watched over us, raised you since up
 “ to build up the Kingdom of *GOD*—the Love of *GOD*
 “ and Man—the Religion of the Heart, even Righteous-
 “ ness and Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghost, always
 “ productive of Religion in the Life ? has it not chosen you
 “ from among your Brethren to restore the somewhat tar-
 “ nished Beauty of the Reformation—that Gospel-
 “ Church ! which is all glorious within ?

“ Permit me then, my Lord, to say, that I presage great
 “ Things from that Spirit of your Grace's, that then made
 “ such a glorious Stand. For what may not such a Spirit
 “ farther do under the Direction of the divine *Unction* !
 “ especially as you have nothing now to hope or fear from
 “ the World ? O, what a Talent has *GOD* entrusted you
 “ with !

“ Will

Grace utterly to renounce ; and *now sacrifice* it, as an Oblation, at the Foot of his Cross ; who has said to all those, who *dare* to confess him, (in Opposition to ANTI-CHRIST in all Denominations of *formal, false* Christians) *verily, I say unto you, there is no Man that hath left House, or Brethren, or Sister, or Father, or Mother, or Wife, or Children, or Lands for my Sake and the Gospel ; but* Markx. *shall receive an hundred-fold, now in this Time, 29, 30. Houses, and Brethren, and Sisters, and Mothers, and Children, and Lands, with Persecutions, and in the World to come eternal Life.*

H. P.

Bexley, July
20, 1758.

*“ Will your Grace excuse the poor Zeal of an awakened
“ Heart ? I would in all Things be approved by your
“ Grace, not only as you have a Right to know what I
“ preach and do ; but being in great Gratitude for your
“ kind Reception of me, and Grant of my Request for one of
“ my Sons.*

“ My Lord,

“ Your Grace’s most dutiful Son,

“ And obedient, humble Servant,

*“ Bexley, March
“ 25, 1748.*

“ HEN. PIERS.

F I N I S.



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